

we must remember who they are. They are fathers, mothers, sons and daughters who will soon be in harm's way. In Arkansas—and elsewhere—they have families who love them and communities that will miss them.

We cannot thank these brave men and women enough for their sacrifice. We can only salute their commitment and do what we can to support them when they return. On behalf of Congress, I extend our deepest gratitude to our men and women in uniform.

HONORING SUPERINTENDENT BILL MCNEAL

HON. BRAD MILLER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Mr. MILLER of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the public schools are where we deliver on the promise of equality of opportunity. Today I rise to honor a man who has been delivering on that promise throughout his 29 years of service to Wake County public schools.

Bill McNeal has served Wake County kids in every capacity—as a social studies teacher, a principal, and a county administrator. After 3 years at the helm of our school system, folks back home knew we were lucky to have him as our school superintendent.

Now our secret is out. This week the American Association of School Administrators named Bill McNeal the National Superintendent of the Year.

Superintendent Bill McNeal has proven that even the loftiest ambitions can be met with hard work, boundless determination, and strong leadership. A key author of Wake County's ambitious Goal 2003 program, he has delivered results.

In 1998, 75.4 percent of Wake's third graders were testing at or above grade level in math. In 2003, 93.5 percent achieved the mark. Wake's fourth and fifth graders fared even better, with 95 percent achieving at or above grade level scores. Last year, Wake's high school students averaged a 1067 SAT score, the highest average ever in the school district.

Even more remarkable has been Bill McNeal's campaign to narrow the achievement gap for Wake's diverse and ever expanding student population. The achievement gap in math for students on free or reduced lunch shrank from 35 percent in 1998 to 16 percent in 2003 and in reading shrank from 35 percent in 1998 to 21 percent in 2003—all while student performance has increased across the board.

Not one to sit back and enjoy these successes, Bill McNeal recently implemented the Goal 2008 program to continue to push ahead. He has outlined a blueprint to increase student achievement across the district's elementary, middle, and high schools over the next 5 years. His goal is to have 95 percent of all students in grades 3 through 12 at or above grade level by 2008.

Mr. Speaker, we are honored by Bill McNeal's service to our kids and our community, and I look forward to working with him and our dedicated administrators, teachers, and parents to deliver on the promise of equality of opportunity.

HONORING JAMES A. "BUDDY" CONNER

HON. ZACH WAMP

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize James A. "Buddy" Conner, who has contributed some 45 years of service to the defense of our Nation as a leader, a worker, and a soldier.

Mr. Conner is retiring from a 43-year career with BWX Technologies, where he rose from his first assignment as an associate engineer and technician to become one of the company's four highest-ranking executives.

Mr. Conner was born in Appomattox, Virginia, and after finishing his primary education, devoted two years of service to the United States Marine Corps.

Upon his arrival back home, Mr. Conner took a short trip west to the town of Lynchburg and began working at the recently built Nuclear Facilities Plant while he earned his business degree from Lynchburg College. He would spend the next 40 years at that site, eventually leading the Naval Nuclear Fuel Division, which supplies the United States Navy with all of its nuclear fuel. During his tenure, in 2000, Mr. Conner joined the BWXT team vying for the operations contract for the Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. For Buddy, this was a chance to lead a facility that is still as monumentally important in our nation's defense as it was during one of our country's biggest security successes, the Manhattan Project.

BWXT won the contract, and Mr. Conner has spent the last three years helping to ensure the site will continue to be the unique jewel in America's first line of nuclear defense. When America has called on Buddy and Y-12 to provide stewardship and security to a safe and reliable stockpile of nuclear weapon components and materials, they have stood at the ready.

Since taking the helm of the operating contract for the site, Buddy and his management team have lead Y-12 into an exciting new era. From modernization plans that are transforming our country's Fort Knox of highly enriched uranium into an efficient storage and production facility, to the renewal of the worker's spirit and enthusiasm through aggressive recruitment and mentoring programs that are bringing in the future of Y-12—Buddy and company have set Y-12 on a fantastic course.

Mr. Conner rose through the ranks of one of our premier defense contractors because of his intelligence, dedication, and outstanding work ethic. In short: he is the real deal.

Mr. Conner's 45 years of devotion to our Nation's security are not to be forgotten. That is why today I am proud to recognize Mr. Conner's efforts for his years of service to the defense of our country.

OBSERVING THE PASSING OF AMERICA'S "OLDEST MAN"

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, today Maryland mourns the loss of William Coates, thought to

be the oldest man in America and certainly someone who made a lifetime of contributions to our state.

Mr. Coates was born in Maryland on June 2, 1889 and lived to see many of our nation's most important moments, including the Wright Brothers' first flight, the Great Depression, two World Wars, the Civil Rights movement and the Space age.

Over the span of his life in our great state, Mr. Coates worked with the Maryland State Highway Department in the 1930s building roads for the state, and as a tobacco farmer on a variety of farms throughout Prince George's County including Claggett Farm in Upper Marlboro.

Mr. Coates leaves behind him a caring family of nine children, 21 grandchildren and 37 great-grandchildren, many of whom still live in Prince George's County. His life, like the times he lived through, will long be fondly remembered by his family and friends and those of us who marveled at his longevity.

William Coates' extended and healthy life is also a tribute to a dedicated investment in medical research. Mr. Coates' life shows us that by investing in research, we can all improve our lives and our health.

William Coates has dedicated a life of service to our state and community, and my thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends.

SOCIAL SECURITY SOLVENCY

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to express my disappointment with Federal Reserve Chairman Greenspan's remarks to the House Budget Committee regarding Social Security.

In his testimony, Chairman Greenspan suggests that possible remedies for the record deficits and \$7 trillion debt include increasing the Social Security retirement age and cutting benefits for future recipients.

I want my constituents to know that I will not support any proposal to decrease or eliminate Social Security, nor will I support an increase in the retirement age. Social Security is an entitlement—a right—for the millions of Americans who pay into the program with each and every paycheck. The government has made a commitment to seniors and current workers alike that Social Security will be available upon retirement. We cannot go back on our word.

In Rhode Island, Social Security provides a vital lifeline for a significant percentage of the population. Rhode Island ranks fifth in the nation for the percentage of residents over 75 and sixth in the nation for those over 65. In my district alone, 110,000 people rely on Social Security for their livelihood, and its importance will continue to grow as the baby boom generation begins to retire. Rhode Islanders spend their lives contributing to the vitality of our communities and our country—and paying into Social Security. They are entitled to the benefits they have earned and should not have to worry about whether Social Security will continue to be there when they need it.

Chairman Greenspan is right about one point: this country needs a "greater discipline"

on budgetary matters. I believe that discipline must come from the White House. Congress can no longer afford runaway tax cuts and corporate welfare while neglecting long-term fiscal solvency and current priorities like health care and education.

What Chairman Greenspan neglected to state was that the President's reckless disregard for fiscal responsibility led to a \$521 billion deficit in FY 2004. When President Bush took office in 2001, he inherited a projected \$5.6 trillion surplus over ten years. Just three short years later, we have a projected \$1.9 trillion deficit, a shocking turnaround. While the President was dealt a difficult hand with a recession and the attacks of September 11, many of the fiscal woes are a result of repeated tax cuts that benefit the wealthiest Americans. Our promise to seniors has been bypassed in order to line the pockets of the President's wealthy friends.

Every man, woman, and child in Rhode Island and around the country would owe more than \$24,000 if we were to erase the national debt today. Due to increasing deficits, this amount is only going to increase until we take serious steps to cut wasteful government spending and collect the revenue to meet America's priorities and promises. Baby boomers will challenge the Social Security system, but through responsible fiscal policy, the government will be able to keep this program afloat.

Ensuring the solvency is not the task of one person or one party. Saving Social Security will require difficult decisions, but we cannot play politics with Americans' futures. More than anything, we need an Administration that respects fiscal responsibility and recognizes that in a time of war and recession, we should not be giving trillion-dollar tax cuts to the most privileged Americans. I urge my colleagues to reject Chairman Greenspan's calls to cut benefits to our nation's seniors and instead work to restore fiscal responsibility to our government.

HONORING HAHNVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

HON. W.J. (BILLY) TAUZIN

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to offer my congratulations to the Hahnville High School Tigers football team of Boutte, Louisiana for winning the Louisiana 5A Football Championship game on December 13, 2003 in the New Orleans Superdome.

Led by their head coach, Lou Valdin, the Hahnville Tigers capped off a fairytale season when they defeated the Evangel Eagles 41–35. This year's win marks the school's sixth state championship title, the most recent in 1994, and seals off their perfect 15–0 season. It also gives Lou Valdin his first state title as a head coach.

On their march to this year's championship, the Tigers defeated Fountainebleau, Barbe, Higgins, and Carencro in the playoffs before meeting Evangel in finals. The championship game was a great effort by both teams, but in the end the Hahnville Tigers came away the victors.

I am proud to report that during the championship game the Tigers compiled over 450

total yards on offense on an Evangel defense that had only allowed just over 230 yards per game this season. I would especially like to note the efforts of three key offensive players: Darius Reynaud, Bryant Lee and Craig Turner. Reynaud and Lee both tied 5A Prep Classic records and Reynaud was named the Player of the Game by the media. Reynaud rushed for 184 yards on 31 carries and two touchdowns. He also led the Tigers in receiving yards with 86 on three receptions and a touchdown. Those three touchdowns tied a 5A Prep Classic record for most touchdowns and most points scored. This championship game was monumental in so many ways for both teams. The two teams broke or tied 27 5A Prep Classic records, including most points scored by two teams.

The whole effort was aided by Principal Barbara Fuselier, and all of the students, staff and parents of Hahnville High School who have shown their support for the players and coaches. It was truly a community effort that accomplished this great victory. I would like to commend all of the players and coaches who have shown true dedication to their sport, and I am extremely proud of their accomplishment. It is with great pride that we congratulate and wish them luck in all their future endeavors.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2004

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the "Congressional Gold Medal Program Enhancement Act of 2004." Passage of this legislation will ensure that the medals Congress confers will continue to honor truly exceptional achievement.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, Congress created the Congressional Gold Medal honor in 1776 to recognize military leaders, and then honored George Washington for his heroic service in the Revolutionary War. Since then, the medal program has evolved to become the highest civilian honor Congress confers, and medals have gone to those who have attained exceptional achievement, including General Douglas MacArthur; General Colin Powell; Mother Teresa; Pope John Paul II; British Prime Ministers Winston Churchill and Tony Blair; Jonas Salk; Robert H. Goddard and Rosa Parks.

However, a disturbing trend has started to emerge in which Congress approves numerous medals each year, and in some cases approves medals for groups rather than individuals. Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that either of these trends is in the spirit of the gold medal concept. This legislation seeks to clarify guidelines under which the medals may be awarded, and strengthen the honor of the process.

Under the new guidelines, Congressional Gold Medals could only be awarded to an individual, not to a group. While there are many groups of people deserving recognition, I believe the medal should be awarded for outstanding, individual achievement.

Also under this legislation, no more than two medals could be awarded in any single year.

A similar limitation has worked extraordinarily well for the commemorative coin programs struck by the United States Mint: under reform legislation I authored and Congress passed in 1995, only two coin programs may be conducted in any year. This reform improved the commemorative coin honor and similar standards could improve the process for awarding the Congressional Gold Medal.

It concerns me, Mr. Speaker, that limiting the number of coin programs a year but having no limitation on Congressional Gold Medals—we award five or six in some years—could someday devalue the medals. Mr. Speaker, this is a simple piece of legislation with great meaning. It will ensure the future integrity and true honor of the award. It is my goal that each recipient—President, civil rights leader, military hero, inventor, noted healer—who receives a Congressional Gold Medal will remain part of a unique honor, bestowed by the U.S. Congress.

Mr. Speaker, few can argue with the idea that these medals are an important indicator of American appreciation and gratitude. To maintain this standard, I will work to move the "Congressional Gold Medal Program Enhancement Act" quickly, in order to take effect at the beginning of the next Congress. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation and look forward to working with the Financial Services Committee to bring this bill to the House Floor.

PATRICK PHELAN 2003 GATORADE NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL BOYS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Patrick Phelan, of Wilbraham & Monson Academy, on his selection as the 2003 Gatorade National High School Player of the Year in Boys Soccer. Out of the more than 300,000 young men across the country who play soccer, he was selected for this prestigious award based on athletics, academic achievement, and overall character. This selection, which has been given out for nineteen years in ten different sports, places him in the elite company of highly regarded athletes such as NFL co-MVP Peyton Manning, U.S. Olympic Gold Medallist Marion Jones, and basketball stars Lisa Leslie and LeBron James.

Gatorade is not the first to sing the praises of Patrick Phelan, though. His coach, Gary Cook, refers to him as, "the best player I have coached in my twenty eight years in high school." Beyond being an amazing player, Patrick is also an important leader on the team. According to Cook, "everyday he trains with a purpose and he makes everyone around him better. He was a great captain and teammate."

As a defender, Patrick scored six goals and was attributed with five assists this past season. Along with his on-field performance, the leadership he provided in his role as team captain helped elevate the team to a 12–1–2 regular season and a berth in the Class B New England Prep School Semi-Finals.

Patrick does more than play soccer, though. Academically, he stands out with a grade point